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Nebraska Energy Office and 79 Utilities Provide Energy Saving Kits for up to 24,000 Elementary School Students

A new Energy Detective has landed in many Nebraska schools. The new energy education program featuring an Energy Detective Kit provides fifth grade science students and their families practical knowledge on environmental issues and offers tools to increase energy and water efficiency at home, while decreasing monthly utility bills.

The energy education program is a joint initiative of the **Nebraska Energy Office and 79 utilities: Nebraska Public Power District; Omaha Public Power District; Metropolitan Utilities District; and Lincoln Electric System;** municipally operated systems in: **Arapahoe, Auburn, Battle Creek, Bayard, Beatrice, Brainard, Cambridge, Central City, Cozad, Crete, Curtis, Davenport, David City, Deshler, Dorchester, Fairmont, Falls City, Fremont, Friend, Giltner, Gothenburg, Grand Island, Hampton, Hemingford, Hastings, Hebron, Hildreth, Holdrege, Leigh, Lexington, Lodgepole, Lyons, Madison, Minden, Neligh, North Platte, Ord, Polk, Prague, Randolph, Sargent, Schuyler, Scribner, Seward, South Sioux City, Superior, Wahoo, Wakefield, Wayne, Walthill and West Point** and rural electric systems including **Butler, Cedar-Knox, Cornhusker, Cuming County, Custer, Dawson, Elkhorn, Howard Greeley, KBR, Loup, Loup Valleys, McCook, Niobrara Valley, Norris, North Central, Northeast Nebraska, Perennial, Polk, South Central, Southern, Southwest Stanton County, and Twin Valleys.**

The energy education activity encourages students to work with their families on home retrofit and auditing projects, while generating immediate energy savings. As a part of the activity, energy and water use will be investigated and quantified. The studies include renewable and non-renewable resources, energy generation history and energy saving practices. An Energy Detective-themed kit will be given to each 5th grader to take home and install the energy devices in the kit. The student reports back to the teacher how the family participated.

In one activity, students replace a traditional incandescent light bulb with a compact fluorescent lamp. A compact fluorescent lamp can last up to ten times longer and use 75 percent less energy than a regular incandescent light bulb. This small change can equal big savings.

Students become eligible for the no-cost Energy Detective Kits by attending a school in a participating utility's service area. The curriculum, which meets Nebraska's State Education Standards for Science and Math, has been developed by Resource Action Programs, a national leader in providing energy education materials.

Across the state, up to 24,000 elementary 5th grade students in public, private and home school classrooms can be involved in the energy education activities. The energy program is jointly funded by participating electric and natural gas utilities and has been partially paid with *American Recovery and Reinvestment Act* funds administered by the Nebraska Energy Office.

Schools and utilities wanting to participate in the energy education program can contact Jerry Loos at 402-471-3356 or jerry.loos@nebraska.gov.